



ONYCHOGALEA LUNATA; Gould

of Gould and the Reichenow del. et lith.

ONYCHOGALEA LUNATA, Gould.

Lunated Nail-tailed Kangaroo.

Macropus lunatus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part VIII. p. 93.—Gray, List of Mamm. in Brit. Mus., p. 88.—Waterh. Nat. Hist. of Mamm., vol. i. p. 79.

WHEN writing upon the Birds of Australia I frequently had occasion to allude to the very remarkable manner in which different species of the same form represent each other on opposite parts of the continent; and that a similar law of representation exists among the Mammals, is evidenced by the present and preceding species, which, although most nearly allied, inhabit portions of the country as widely apart as if seas had flowed between, as at some distant period was probably the case. We have no evidence that they approach each other in the interior of the country, as neither of them have yet been discovered within the limits of the intervening colony of South Australia; consequently they must be regarded as beautiful representatives of each other in the respective countries they inhabit.

Although assimilating in form and markings to the *Onychogalea frænata*, the present species is certainly less ornamental, and is also much smaller in all its dimensions. The habits and economy of the two species are very similar; both exhibit a remarkable degree of shyness and timidity, and seek safety in flight upon the slightest alarm. I had no opportunity of observing it in a state of nature myself, but Mr. Gilbert's notes inform me that "the *Waurong*," by which name it is known to the natives, "is found in the gum forests of the interior of Western Australia, where there are patches of thick scrub and dense thickets, in the open glades intervening between which it is occasionally seen sunning itself, but at the slightest alarm immediately betakes itself to the shelter of the thick scrub; the dogs sometimes succeed in driving it out to the open spots, when, like the Kangaroo rats, it runs to the nearest hollow log, and is then easily captured. I remarked, that when sitting quietly cleaning itself, there was a constant twitching of the tail in an upward direction; an action which I have never seen performed by any other Kangaroo. I was not sufficiently near to ascertain whether this motion of the tail had any connection with the claw or nail at its extremity, but I think it not improbable. The *Waurong* makes no nest, but forms a hollow in the soft ground beneath a thick brush in which it lies during the heat of the day."

Fur soft and of moderate length; general tint ashy grey, finely pencilled with dusky and yellowish white; back of the neck and shoulders vinous rust-colour; a short distance behind the base of the fore-leg a distinct curved white mark; under surface of the body pale grey, the hairs tipped with dirty white; on the sides of the body a faint rusty tint, more distinct in some specimens than in others; around the eye a ring of pale rust-colour, and the muzzle suffused with the same tint; ear clothed with long white hairs within, and externally with very minute dusky hairs finely freckled with yellowish white; on the hinder half the hairs are longer and almost white, at the apex a delicate fringe of blackish hairs; fore-feet in some specimens brown, in others dirty white; tarsi chiefly dirty white, but the sides of the toes suffused with pale brown; tail clothed for the most part with short adpressed hairs, having a general greyish tint; on the upper surface the hairs are somewhat lengthened, and on the apical portion they form a slight crest which is usually blackish; at the tip of the tail is a small conical horny appendage like a nail, of about an eighth of an inch in length.

		Male.	
		ft.	in.
Length from the nose to the root of the tail		1	8
„ of the tail		0	12
„ „ tarsus and toes including the nails		0	4 ³ / ₄
„ „ arm and hand including the nails		0	3 ¹ / ₄
„ „ face from the tip of the nose to the base of the ear		0	3
„ „ ear		0	2 ¹ / ₄

It is to be regretted that this as well as all other Kangaroos lose the delicate tints of their colouring on exposure to light; so much so in the present instance, that Museum and recent specimens could scarcely be considered as identical.

The Plate represents the two sexes rather under the natural size.